

Support for and Effect of Disease Control Measures

This section addresses the objective to better understand landowners' support of Wisconsin DNR disease control measures. In particular, the section considers landowners' agreement with the Wisconsin DNR's goals and policies to address CWD; awareness and effect of various incentives designed to increase the number of deer harvested; perception of change in land use by deer hunters; opinion of the state using sharpshooters to reduce the deer herd; perception of barriers to CWD eradication; reasons for limiting the number of deer harvested from their land; and an overall assessment of how the Wisconsin DNR is doing managing CWD.

Agreement with Wisconsin DNR's CWD Goals and Policies

Landowners were asked their opinion of several Wisconsin DNR CWD goals and policies on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree", 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree", and 7 represents "strongly agree." The majority of landowners favor attempts to control or eliminate CWD, and to a slightly lesser extent they favor a statewide ban on baiting and recreational feeding of deer. Opinion is divided over whether the deer population in the DEZ should be reduced to less than five deer per square mile. The majority disagrees with banning baiting and feeding just in counties where CWD has been reported (Table 10).

Table 10 explains that landowners support the Wisconsin DNR's mission of disease eradication and control; however, they are less supportive of other goals and techniques. A majority of landowners support the Wisconsin DNR's goals of preventing CWD from spreading any further in Wisconsin (71%); not allowing the percentage of CWD-infected deer in the DEZ to increase (69%); eliminating CWD from the wild deer population (64%); banning deer baiting on a statewide basis (61%); and banning recreational feeding of deer on a statewide basis (55%) (Table 10).

Table 10. Agreement with Wisconsin DNR's CWD goals and policies. (Means followed by the same letter are not statistically different at the $\alpha=0.05$ level; means which are **not** followed by the same letter are significantly different.)

Wisconsin DNR CWD Goals and Policies	Percent "Slightly" to "Strongly" Agree	Mean Score ^a
CWD should not be allowed to spread further	71	5.2 A
Percent of CWD deer should not be allowed to increase	69	5.1 A
Baiting should be banned statewide	61	5.0 AB
CWD should be eliminated	64	4.9 BC
Recreational feeding should be banned statewide	55	4.7 C
Baiting should be banned in CWD and surrounding counties	49	4.4 D
Recreational feeding should be banned in CWD and surrounding counties	51	4.3 D
Wild deer population should be reduced in the DEZ to less than 5 deer/square mile	43	4.0 E
Baiting should be banned only in CWD counties	33	3.6 F
Recreational feeding should be banned only in CWD counties	33	3.5 F
Wisconsin should do nothing to eliminate CWD	20	2.8 G

^a Responses were on scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree," 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree," and 7 represents "strongly agree."

About one-half of the landowners support: banning recreational feeding of deer (51%) and banning baiting of deer (49%) in CWD-infected counties and the surrounding counties (Table 10). Significantly less than one-half of the landowners support: reducing the wild deer population in the DEZ to less than five deer per square mile (43%); banning baiting of deer only in CWD-infected counties (33%); banning recreational feeding of deer only in CWD-infected counties (33%); and doing nothing to eliminate CWD from the wild deer herd (20%; seventy percent disagree with this statement).

Please note it is likely that more landowners would support a statewide ban on baiting than a ban that is restricted to CWD counties and surrounding counties due to equity. In other words, if they cannot use bait, than no one should be allowed to use bait. Additionally, previous Department surveys document that hunters in the southern half of Wisconsin offer greater support for a

statewide ban on deer baiting than do hunters in northern Wisconsin. So for some, CWD may be their means for ending the deer baiting debate.

Many landowners in the focus groups do not believe an eradication goal of five deer per square mile is attainable, nor is it advisable.

[Because of CWD do you think you need to reduce the deer herd on your land?] No, because we've already got it reduced where we want it.

I think there are areas within the eradication zone that have too many deer and I believe that my area is probably one of them. But I think the main stumbling block is that we're looking at a goal of five or less deer. My neighbors, everybody I talk to in my neighborhood, my friends, my deer hunters, nobody's willing to see deer numbers go that low...I think a livable number is somewhere in that 20 to 25 range per square mile. I think people can get behind that.

If this CWD had been here for over two years, there would be a dead deer under every bush. It's two years later and there isn't a dead deer under every bush and I haven't seen a sick deer yet. So, I'd say no, eradication is not necessary.

I don't think you can answer eradication because the data isn't there. The science is not there. If you could say with just a little qualification that this is a highly transmissible disease, it's going to spread through our entire deer population, it's going to eliminate any form of hunting or sports activities related to deer, furthermore, it's going to spread to cattle, it's going to spread from cattle, it's going to spread to humans...If you establish those questions then there is no question to be answered — it has to be eradicated. But that is not the case. The science is not there.

[But is the idea of a goal of less than five deer per square mile, do you think that's feasible?]... No. You got too many people that will not allow hunters to hunt... So, you've got people that aren't going to allow access to their land. You've got already a relatively high density on the land. You've got difficult terrain to hunt. No. It's not feasible. You won't eradicate it. It's here. We'll just deal with it.

[Is there anyone here that says, 'Wow, it's at 30 now. Five that just sounds way too low to me?'] Yeah. Our family lives to hunt. Our whole family is built around the outdoors and five is scary. If we're at 32 right now, five is darn scary...I'm not saying that we wouldn't do that, but it's scary.

Some landowners support disease eradication through herd reduction.

It was really hard to bite the bullet at first but once we did we realized that it isn't the end of the tradition. It isn't end of the world.

Well CWD won't go away by itself. It won't go away until all the deer die. I mean you talk wanting to have some deer left but I think if you got the deer herd down to five deer per square mile you actually have a chance of maybe getting rid of it to where five or ten years after that you actually have a deer herd again.

The sooner you get rid of them, the sooner you're going to have a healthy herd back.

It's not something that left on its own, well, they will eventually die. It won't go away. Eradicating the CWD is the fastest turn around you're going to get.



Awareness of Incentives for Harvesting Deer in the DEZ

Most landowners are aware of at least one incentive for harvesting more deer. Only ten percent are unaware of any of these incentives. The incentive that is least widely known is the deer registration lottery.

Table 11. Awareness of incentives.

Incentive	Percent Aware
Hunter receives \$200 for CWD positive deer	81
Landowner receives 2 free buck tags in DEZ	79
Landowner receives \$200 for CWD positive deer	75
Hunter may receive \$20 for deer registered in lottery	49

Table 11 provides evidence that only one-half of the landowners (49%) are aware that a hunter could earn \$20 through lottery drawings for each registered deer s/he shot in the disease eradication zone. However, three-fourths or more of the landowners are aware of the opportunity for: a hunter to receive \$200 for shooting a CWD-positive deer (81%); a landowner in the disease eradication zone to receive two free buck tags (79%); and for a landowner in the disease eradication zone to receive \$200 for having a CWD-positive deer shot on his/her land (75%).

Table 12. Hunter and non-hunter awareness of incentives. (Chi-square analysis shows that there is a significant difference (at the $P < 0.001$ level) between hunters and non-hunters for each incentive.)

Incentive	Percent Aware	
	Hunters	Non-hunters
Hunter receives \$200 for CWD positive deer	89	68
Landowner receives 2 free buck tags in DEZ	84	71
Landowner receives \$200 for CWD positive deer	86	60
Hunter may receive \$20 for deer registered in lottery	61	31

Table 12 shows that landowners who hunt are more likely to be aware of these incentives than landowners who do not hunt. Ninety-four percent of landowners who hunt are aware of incentives, while only of eighty-five percent of landowners who do not hunt are aware of incentives.

Perceived Effect of Increased Incentives for CWD Positive Deer

Landowners were asked what the effects might be of increasing the incentive for harvesting a CWD-positive deer from \$200 to \$500. More landowners thought that they would see an increase in the number of hunters asking for permission to hunt on their land than any other effect. While opinion is somewhat divided on whether the increased incentive would lead to more deer being harvested, the majority feel they would not spend any extra time hunting themselves, nor would they be inclined to allow more hunters access to their land (Figures 4a-4d).

Figures 4a-4d illustrate the landowners' belief that an increase in the number of hunters asking permission to hunt their land would be the only probable effect of increasing the incentive for harvesting a CWD-positive deer. Just under two-thirds (64%) of the landowners believe they would see an increase in the number of hunters asking permission to hunt their land. (Figure 4a).

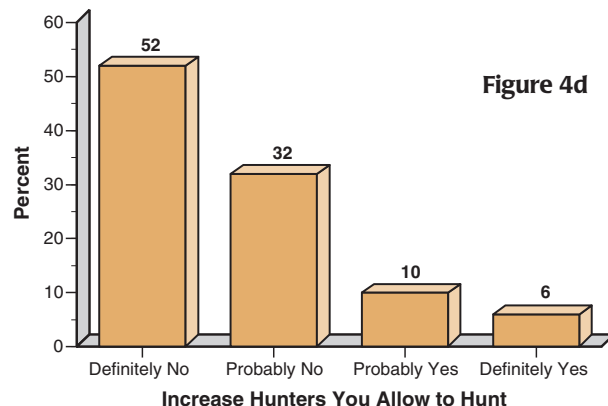
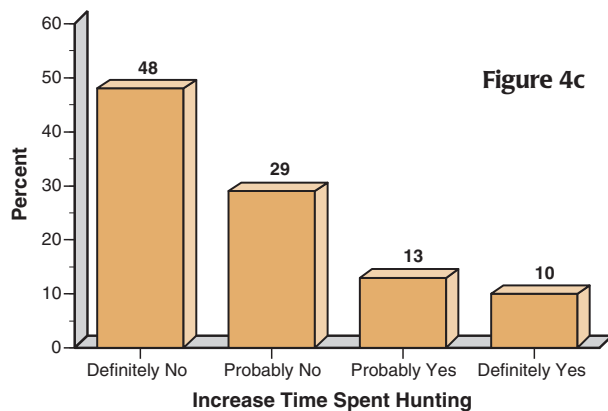
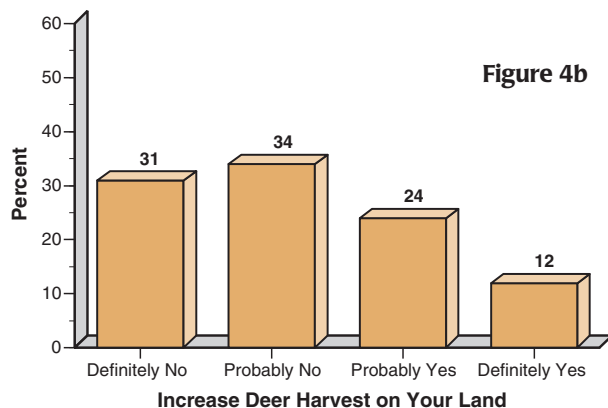
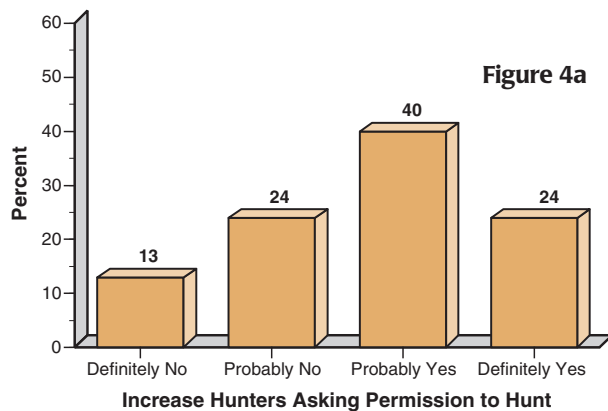
Just over one-third (36%) of the landowners anticipate they would see an increase in the overall harvest of deer from their land (Figure 4b). About one-fourth (23%) of the landowners think the increased incentive would result in them spending more time hunting. (Figure 4c). Less than one-fifth (16%) of the landowners say the increased incentive would encourage them to allow more hunters to hunt their land. (Figure 4d).

Please note that the following **Table 13 highlights the** mean responses to the data presented in Figure 4. Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents "definitely no" and 4 represents "definitely yes".

Table 13. Effects of increasing the incentive for harvesting a CWD-positive deer from \$200 to \$500. (t-test analysis indicates that all of the mean scores presented in this table are statistically different from each other at the $P < 0.001$ level.)

Effect	Mean Score ^a
Increase hunters asking permission to hunt	2.7
Increase deer harvest on your land	2.2
Increase time spent hunting	1.8
Increase hunters you allow to hunt	1.7

^a Responses were on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents "definitely no" and 4 represents "definitely yes".



Incentives that Increased Time Spent Hunting

Although a majority of the landowners that hunt say they are willing to or prefer to harvest an antlerless deer, the opportunity to harvest a buck had the greatest effect on increased time spent hunting.

Table 14 explains that landowners who were hunters were most enthused about the opportunity to harvest additional bucks. The incentive that increased the most amount of time that landowners spent hunting is the opportunity for them to receive two free buck tags. More than one-half (54%) of the landowners say they spent more time hunting because of the free buck tags than if the free tags were not offered. However, not quite as many landowners report that the longer season induced them to spend more time hunting (45%).

Table 14. Incentives that increased time spent hunting.

Incentive	Percent Response
Two free buck tags	54
Longer gun season	45
\$200 for hunter taking a deer with CWD	21
\$200 for landowner for a deer with CWD	21
\$20 Lottery for registered deer	19

When combined, the multiple types of monetary rewards accounted for more than one-fourth of landowners who hunt (28%) to spend more time hunting.

Please note that about one-third of the landowners (32%) who hunted report that none of these monetary incentives got them out hunting any more than usual.

Figures 4a-4d. Effects of increasing the incentive for a CWD-positive deer from \$200 to \$500.

Perceived Effect of Increasing Lottery Payments for Registered Deer

Landowner response to the possibility of increasing the lottery payment from \$20 to \$50 for each registered deer harvested from the DEZ is similar to the response to increasing payments for CWD-positive deer. The overall finding is that a majority would not anticipate any changes.

Figures 5a-5b show that for a slight majority of landowners, an increase in the number of hunters asking permission to hunt on their land is the only probable effect of increasing the lottery payment. Just over one-half (56%) of the landowners believe they would see an increase in the number of hunters asking permission to hunt their land (Figure 5a). Approximately one-third (32%) of the landowners anticipate they would see an increase in the overall harvest of deer from their land (Figure 5b). About one-fourth (23%) of the landowners think the increased lottery payment would result in them spending more time hunting. (Figure 5c). One landowner in seven (13%) says the increased incentive would encourage him/her to allow more hunters to hunt his/her land (Figure 5d).

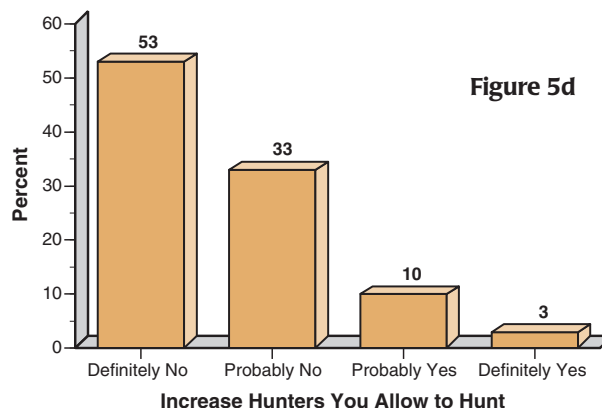
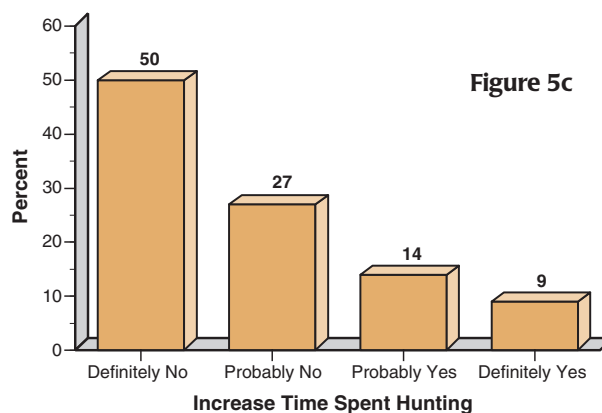
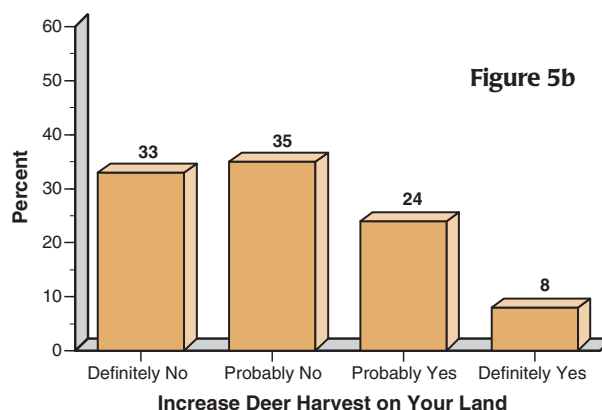
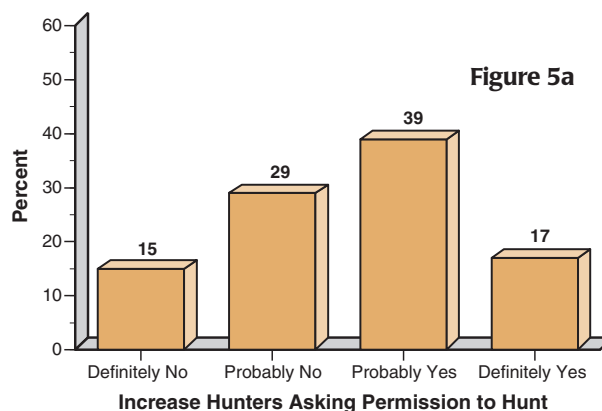
Please note the following **Table 15 illustrates the** mean responses to the data presented in Figure 5. Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”.

Table 15. Effects of increasing the lottery payments from \$20 to \$50 for each registered deer harvested from the DEZ. (t-test analysis indicates that all of the mean scores presented in this table are statistically different from each other at the $P < 0.001$ level.)

Effect	Mean Score ^a
Increase hunters asking permission to hunt	2.6
Increase deer harvest on your land	2.1
Increase time spent hunting	1.8
Increase hunters you allow to hunt	1.6

^a Responses were on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”

Figures 5a-5d. Effects of increasing the lottery payments from \$20 to \$50 for each registered deer harvested from the DEZ.



Incentives that Increased Deer Harvested

As previously noted, the correlation between the amount of time spent hunting and the number of deer harvested is positive but not particularly high ($r = 0.31$). Not surprisingly, fewer landowners report that these incentives resulted in them harvesting more deer. Although fewer landowners report a positive effect on their harvest from the incentives, this is not to say that the incentives had no impact on the number of deer taken.

Table 16. Incentives that increased deer harvest.

Incentive	Percent Response
Two free buck tags	35
Longer gun season	33
\$200 for Hunter Taking a Deer with CWD	7
\$200 for Landowner for a Deer with CWD	5
\$20 Lottery for Registered Deer	8

Table 16 shows that among those who report a positive result from the incentives, it is again the two free buck tags (35%) and the longer season (33%) that receive most of the credit. Only about one hunter in ten (11%) reports that one or more of the monetary incentives results in more deer taken. In all, more than one-half of the hunters (56%) report at least one of these incentives result in them harvesting more deer and just over two-fifths (44%) do not report that any of these incentives result in them harvesting more deer (Table 16).



What Incentive Would Result in the Most Deer Harvested?

Landowners generally have negative feelings about the likelihood that increased incentives would yield a greater result on their own land. However, if any of these incentives work, landowners logically feel the largest reward would have the greatest effect; they feel that increasing the hunter/landowner reward for a CWD positive deer from \$200 to \$500 would produce the greatest deer harvest.

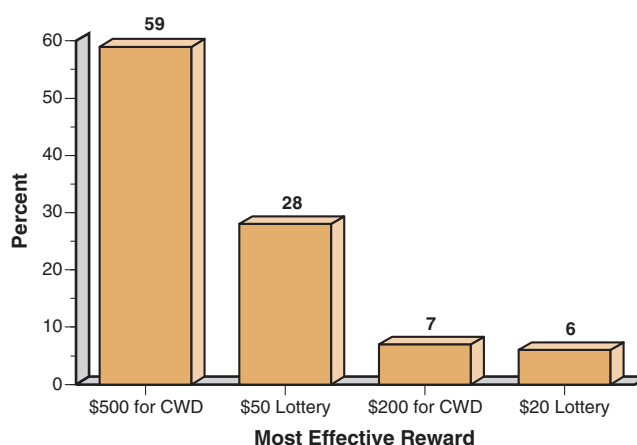


Figure 6. Reward that would result in the most deer harvested.

Figure 6 illustrates that of the four rewards offered, landowners anticipated that a \$500 reward for both the landowner and the hunter for shooting a CWD-positive deer would result in the most deer being harvested from the DEZ. Nearly three-fifths (59%) of the landowners believe the \$500 reward would result in the highest deer harvest. Just over one-fourth (28%) believe \$50 payments through lottery drawings for each registered deer from the DEZ would result in the highest deer harvest. Less than one landowner in ten thinks the \$200 reward or the \$20 lottery payments would result in the highest deer harvest from the DEZ (Figure 6).

Personally Preferred Incentives

The largest block of landowners (40%) is opposed to any monetary incentive for harvesting deer. Of the remaining 60 percent, those who favor the \$500 reward for the landowner and hunter account for the largest group.

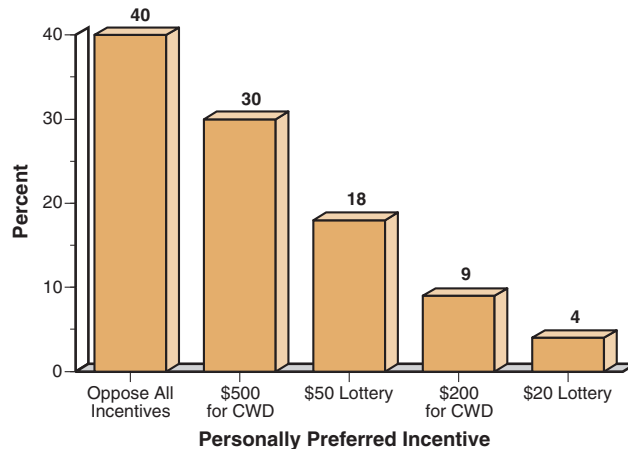


Figure 7. Reward that is most preferred by landowners.

Figure 7 indicates that more landowners oppose monetary incentives than support any single incentive. Two-fifths (40%) of the landowners oppose all four monetary rewards. Just under one-third (30%) of the landowners prefer the \$500 reward for the landowner and hunter; less than one-fifth (18%) prefer the \$50 payment through lottery drawings; and less than one landowner in ten prefers the \$200 reward or the \$20 lottery payments (Figure 7).

When evaluating which incentive has the potential to have the greatest impact, the responses differ depending upon whether the landowner is a deer hunter or not (Figure 8). The largest group of hunters is opposed to any incentives, while the largest group of non-hunters prefers the \$500 reward for the landowner and hunter. Among hunters who favor a monetary incentive, opinion is equally divided between the \$500 reward for the landowner and hunter and the \$50 deer registration lottery.

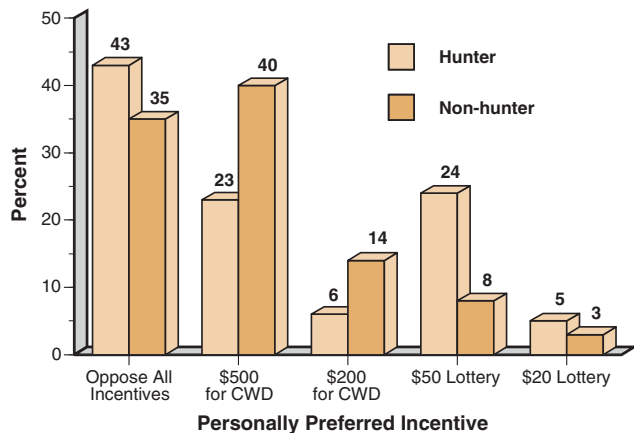


Figure 8. Reward that is most preferred by hunting and non-hunting landowners. (Chi-square analysis reveals that the difference in responses between hunters and non-hunters are significant at the $P < 0.001$ level.)

Figure 8 shows that the largest block of hunters is opposed to all monetary incentives while the largest block of non-hunters favors the \$500 reward for having a CWD-positive deer shot on his/her land. Forty-three percent of the hunters oppose all monetary rewards and a nearly equal percentage of non-hunters prefer the \$500 reward. Just over one-third (35%) of the non-hunters oppose all monetary incentives and about one-fourth of the hunters favor the \$500 reward and the \$50 lottery payments (Figure 8).

No topic in the focus groups generated more discussion than that of using monetary payments as incentives for herd reduction. Most comments underscore both landowner and hunter disdain for monetary incentives.

[Did the \$200/\$400 incentive change anything in the way hunting is handled on your land?]

No. Absolutely not. It's disgusting. It turns my stomach. It's a bounty. This incentive, it's more of a dis-incentive.

Bad idea... You're not going to bring more hunters in if they can't, if the hunters don't have anywhere to go hunting. I'm not going to let somebody hunt my land because they don't need a license. So, I don't really think that is going to bring hoards of hunters to kill more deer by saying, 'You don't have to pay your license fee' or 'You can get \$200.'

Nothing. It didn't change a thing. The way I look at it is in our area with the two positive deer within four miles of us in two years, the odds of shooting [a positive deer] are very slim so I'm not going to get all excited to go run out into the woods for \$200 and shoot 25 deer that I got to haul away. The meat isn't probably going to test positive.

The DNR was asking, 'Would you take these free tags?' And then it was on the radio, 'Look how supportive the hunters are by taking these tags.' We were taking these tags because we thought we could save the deer... We're trying to take these tags so other people can't get them so you can't kill them. [So you had different motives for taking the tags?] Right. A lot of people did. They figured you could only afford to print so many of them.

If you have \$200 somebody might say, 'Geez, we can get \$200 for this.' That is ludicrous. Why don't you take that money and use it for testing and try to find out more about the disease rather than giving it away? If you go back to your nine-day season you have more deer killed, you've got more deer to test and bring tradition back so you've got more hunters... Take that money and use it towards getting our tests done quicker.

[So you as a landowner and perhaps the shooter, you may have earned \$400, and that's just not worth it for you?] I can see where it's a bonus or an incentive in an area where they have a higher concentration of positive deer. In our area, it just wasn't a big incentive.

The way I look at it is, with the very low rate of positives, if any, that we don't have a real incentive to shoot more.

[Is the \$20 incentive or reward worth the effort, and by effort I mean your effort and the effort of DNR staff to administer it...?] I don't think so. Twenty bucks is not worth my time to take another deer I don't really want.

No way. Who's gonna go out, shoot another they don't really want, need and drag it all home all for \$20?

Not all landowners were critical of the incentive program. For some, the monetary incentives encouraged them to spend additional time hunting and to harvest additional deer.

Yes. It gave me a little more incentive... By not seeing a deer day after day it gave me a little more incentive to sit there not seeing anything. So it gave you an incentive to go out.

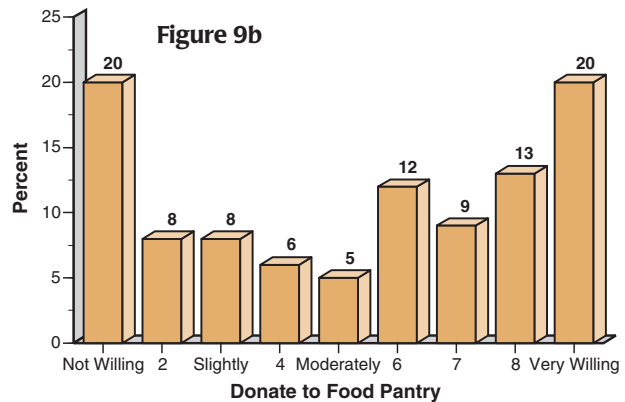
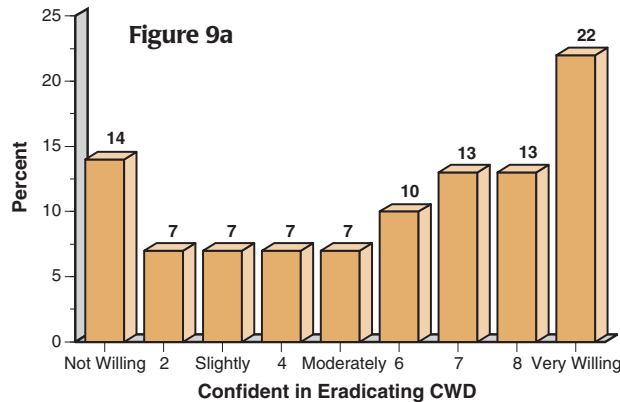
Absolutely. Our family did spend more time, you bet. [Your whole family did. Did it pay off for you?] Yeah, we've killed seven positive deer on 250 acres in the last two years and we've found at least that many dead that we attribute to CWD. So, yeah, absolutely. We're out there, it's great incentive to get the boys out in the woods and my brother and I love to hunt so we don't need any, but yeah, it's made a difference.

I guess I could say we did have some people come hunting this year probably, partially, because of it. Maybe to get some money back.

I would've been out there anyway but it being as I had two positive deer before and just a couple miles from where I initially found it, it gave me a little more incentive, like I said...

Other Incentives for Hunting Permission

Many landowners would be willing to allow more hunting on their property if they thought it would eradicate CWD and if the deer harvested could be donated to a food pantry (Figure 9).



Figures 9a-9b. Confidence in disease eradication and venison donation as incentives.

Figure 9a illustrates that two-thirds of the landowners (65%) would be “moderately” or “very willing” to allow more deer to be killed their property if they thought it would help eradicate CWD. Three-fifths of the landowners (59%) would be “moderately” or “very willing” to allow more deer to be killed on their land in the DEZ if the deer could be donated to a food pantry (Figure 9b). The findings underscore the importance of outreach efforts to landowners and hunters of the now-available venison donation program.

The results presented in Figure 9 were given on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 represents “not at all willing”, 3 represents “slightly willing”, 5 represents “moderately willing”, and 9 represents “very willing.” The mean score for allowing more deer to be killed if the venison went to a food pantry is 5.2; the mean score for allowing more deer to be killed if the landowner was confident that killing more deer would help eradicate CWD is 5.7. These means are significantly different from each other at the $P \leq 0.05$ level.

We should also note that non-hunters are more willing than hunters to allow more deer to be killed on their property if the deer could be donated to a food pantry or if they were confident that killing more deer would help eradicate CWD. This difference between non-hunters and hunters is significantly different at the $P < 0.001$ level.



Changes in Hunters' Land Use Since the Discovery of CWD

Landowners (both hunters and non-hunters) do not report any substantial increase in the use of their land for deer hunting by others.

Figures 10a-10d reveal that CWD has encouraged only a small percentage of hunters to seek permission to hunt private land in the DEZ; likewise, only a small percentage of landowners provided increased access to their land for new hunters. One-fourth of the landowners (26%) agree that they have seen an increase in trespass hunting on their land since CWD was discovered in Wisconsin (Figure 10a). For one landowner in seven (14%), the number of hunters who have traditionally hunted the land and the number of hunters asking for permission to hunt the land has increased (Figures 10b and 10c). About one landowner in six (17%) agrees that since CWD was discovered, the number of hunters s/he has given permission to hunt the land has increased (Figure 10d).

In general, landowners report that use of their land by hunters has not increased. Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree," 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree," and 7 represents "strongly agree." Table 17 shows that all four means fall in the "disagree" range, indicating that hunting and occurrences of trespassing have not increased.

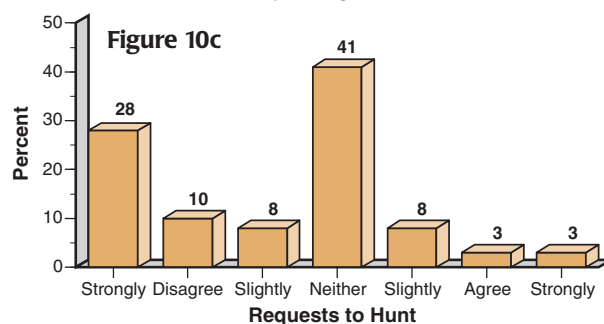
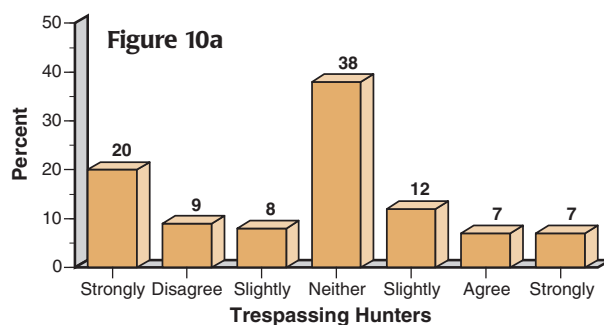


Table 17. Change in land use by hunters. (Mean scores followed by the same letter are not statistically different from each other at the $P \leq 0.05$ level.)

Since CWD was discovered in Wisconsin the number of hunters...	Mean Score ^a
...that are trespass hunting on my land has increased	3.6 A
...who have traditionally hunted my land has increased	3.1 B
...asking for permission to hunt my land has increased	3.1 B
...I give permission to hunt my land has increased	3.1 B

^a Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree," 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree," and 7 represents "strongly agree."

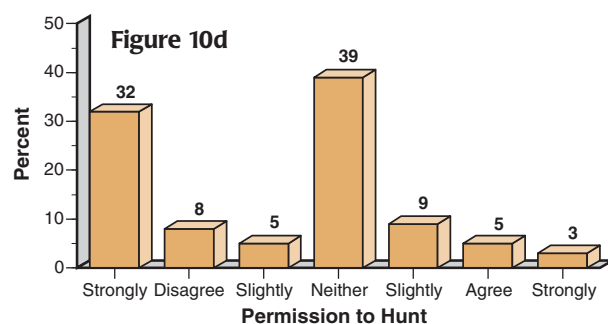
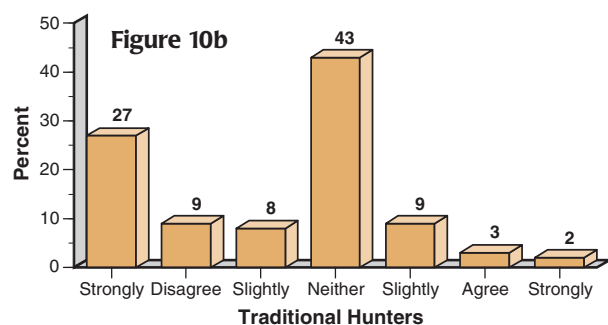
From the focus groups:

[Have you lost any hunters from your traditional hunting group because of CWD?] I know we lost one family that came down for ten years, and when CWD came around they just stopped... [Did they talk to you at all about it?] Well, they did have another place to hunt was part of it, but it was just kind of like, 'If we got to shoot all the does and this, we don't want to do it.'

I lost three guys that I lease 120 to...[And did they give an explanation?] CWD. Scared of it.

Figures 10a-10d.

Increase in land use for deer hunting by others.



Preferred Deer Hunting Season in the DEZ

The largest group of landowners (35%) prefers some gun deer hunting season other than the alternatives listed. A smaller group (29%) prefers a hunting season similar to the 2003 season. Finally, a substantial group would prefer either of the seasons that give deer and hunters a break in early November. There is no obvious consensus on this issue.

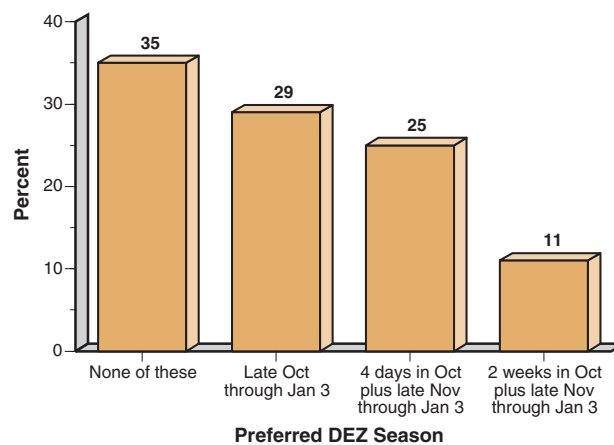


Figure 11. Preferred gun deer season in the DEZ.

Figure 11 indicates that there is no consensus on a gun deer hunting season that is most preferred by DEZ landowners. The largest block of landowners (35%) opposes all season options in favor of a season other than those listed in the questionnaire and about three landowners in ten (29%) prefer a gun deer season in the DEZ that starts in late October and ends on January 3 (similar to the 2003 season). Additionally, one-fourth of the landowners (25%) prefer a gun deer season in the DEZ that includes four days in late October and then starts the Saturday before Thanksgiving and ends on January 3 and about one landowner in ten (11%) prefers a season that includes two weeks in late October and then starts the Saturday before Thanksgiving and ends on January 3.

Please note that there is no statistical difference in the responses from hunters and non-hunters presented in Figure 11.

Most focus group participants objected to the longer season options because they disrupted other hunting pursuits and farming operations. These objectors would prefer that the Department reinstate the traditional nine-day gun deer season. They firmly believe that just as many, if not more, deer would be killed under the nine-day season. Furthermore, some believe that a return to tradition would do much to mend landowner-Wisconsin DNR relationships.

I think we should go back to our traditional nine-day hunting season where everyone is psyched up for those days. We wait all year round for those nine days. Businesses are all tuned to it, everybody is, schools are all tuned to it and everything, churches and what not, and that is a big thing. By diluting that thing and saying, 'We're going to spread this out over three months or two months' it takes away the whole psyche of hunting.

One word: tradition. The way it was... Give the season back to the bow hunters. My boy lives for bow hunting. He doesn't like to rifle hunt. If you let our traditional season be, the kill will go up, whether we like it or not, it will go up. And that's it. It screws up my rabbit hunting. I love to small game hunt and it screws up my trapping when they do it all until January. Go back to tradition, nine days.

The more hunters you put in a shorter period of time, the more deer killed you will have than if you spread them over a couple months because not everybody hunts the same day. You've got to get these deer to move, otherwise they're not going to get shot. They'll go over on the neighbors. They're not hunting over there today so they're lying at the neighbor's so they'll go over there, and they're safe.

In order for them to achieve that [eradication goal] we have to go back to a traditional season framework. Our gun hunting has to start the Saturday before Thanksgiving to get back all the family events that went along with that, all the relationships, friends that came together. Get everybody in the woods at the same time.

Tradition is what people really want. I think most will let bygones be bygones and maybe the Department was in a bad position when they had to make a decision and they had to do a forceful one. Now, by God, we know it's not going to work. Let's get back to where we were. Let's give people their traditions back. I think people could forgive. That would repair a lot of things with a lot of people. You're talking about repairing things.

It's a headache for the farmer too, for the landowner basically. Having that long a season is just a pain. [Would you be taking as many deer off your land if it was maintained at just the traditional nine day season?] Yeah I think I would.

Not all landowners agree. Some believe the additional hunting opportunities offered through a longer season increased their deer harvest and increased family get-togethers.

[You were saying that if it was just the nine-day season you wouldn't have taken as many deer.] No, we wouldn't. We wouldn't have the opportunity. We hunted just like we have traditionally in the past but our family gets together, I mean we were getting together every weekend that we could and sometimes evenings or afternoons go out and make drives with whoever we had or sit over a good spot all day, right up to the last day.

Same here. We hunted, got together more as a family and so we got more deer off the land... 'cause we had the longer opportunities.

Is There a Role for Sharpshooters?

The majority of landowners do not feel there is a role for sharpshooters in reducing the deer herd in the DEZ. On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”, the mean score was 2 indicating that the weight is toward “no” when it comes to sharpshooters.

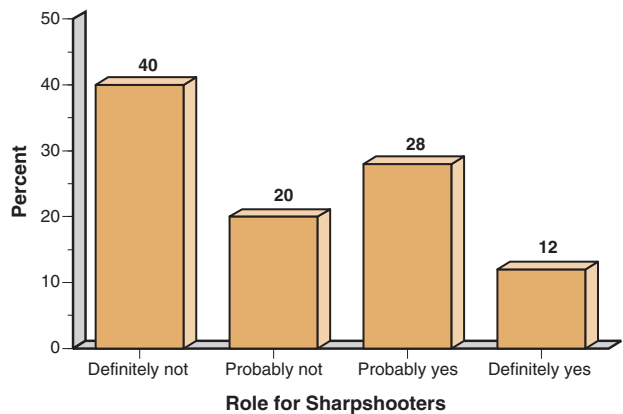


Figure 12. Support for sharpshooters to help reduce the deer herd in the DEZ.

Figure 12 points out that the majority of landowners do not think sharpshooters should be used to help reduce the deer herd in the DEZ. Three-fifths (60%) of the landowners oppose the use of sharpshooters. Conversely, two landowners in five (40%) say they “probably” or “definitely” believe there is a role for sharpshooters for helping to reduce the deer herd. However, we should note that a larger block of non-hunters than hunters support the use of sharpshooters, though majority support is not found (47 percent of non-hunters, compared to 29 percent of hunters support using sharpshooters to help reduce the deer herd).

Would Landowners Allow Sharpshooters on Their Land?

Landowners are even more negative about their potential willingness to allow sharpshooters on their own land. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”, the mean response is 1.7. Landowners who see no role for sharpshooters would not let them on their land, while landowners who do see a role for sharpshooters would allow them on their land. This is highly correlated with the previous findings presented in Figure 12 ($r = 0.762$).

Figure 13 highlights that a high majority of landowners are unwilling to allow sharpshooters on their land to help reduce the deer herd. Three-fourths of the landowners (76%) say they “definitely” or “probably” would not allow sharpshooters on their land and about one-fourth of the landowners (24%) would likely provide sharpshooter access to their land.

Please note that the Department is currently using sharpshooters only on properties where landowners have given permission. The findings presented in Figure 13 questions whether the Department has gained sharpshooter access to one-fourth of the properties in the DEZ where landowners would likely provide access. If not, there may be opportunities for increased access to private lands, and thus, the Department might consider renewed efforts to gain such access.

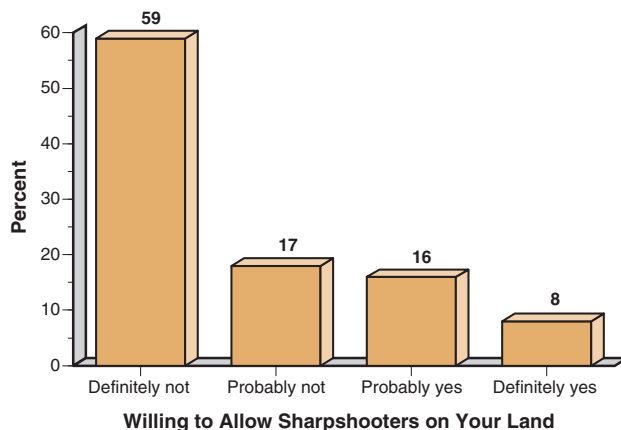


Figure 13. Percent of landowners that would allow sharpshooters on their land.

We should also note that similar to the previous finding presented in Figure 12, non-hunters were more supportive than hunters in their willingness to allow sharpshooters on their land. Thirty-four percent of non-hunters compared to 13 percent of hunters, would likely provide sharpshooter access to their own land.

Sharpshooters and Bait

Landowners have negative feelings about allowing sharpshooters to hunt over bait in order to reduce the deer herd. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”, the mean response is 2.0. These responses are highly correlated with the results shown in Figure 12 ($r = 0.788$) and Figure 13 ($r = 0.715$).

Figure 14 shows that a majority of landowners oppose the use of bait by sharpshooters to help reduce the deer herd in the DEZ. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of the landowners oppose the use of bait by sharpshooters but just over one-third of the landowners (36%) believe sharpshooters should be allowed to shoot over bait. Similar to the previous note accompanying Figure 12, a larger block of non-hunters than hunters support the use of bait by sharpshooters. Just over two-fifths (44%) of the non-hunters, compared to one-fourth (24%) of the hunters, support sharpshooters using bait to help reduce the deer herd.

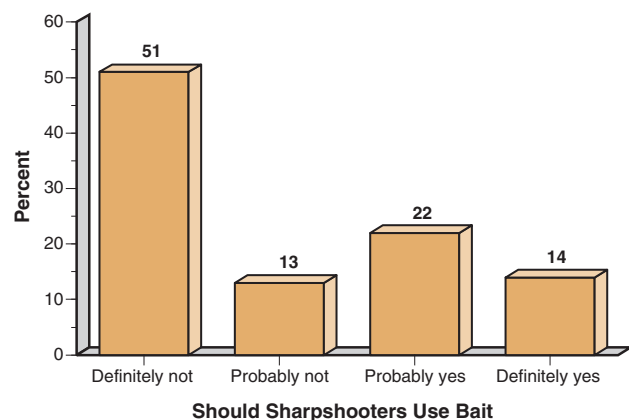


Figure 14. Support for sharpshooters using bait to help reduce the deer herd in the DEZ.

From the focus groups:

You'll so infuriate people with that policy by implementing that that it would be counter-productive.

It's not palatable. [Why is that?] It will anger the people that are against your program to see the Department go to that extreme. For every one you shoot they'll [opposing landowners] grow ten more [deer].

They're not going to let you in. They're not going to let you in because they want their hunting preserve.

This landowner notes that the Wisconsin DNR must become even tougher to obtain sharpshooter access to private lands.

The DNR's going to have to get more teeth than they have, and everybody thinks that they have too much now. They're going to have to get more teeth to get onto that property.



Sharpshooters and Bait on Private Land

Given the data presented earlier regarding sharpshooters (Figures 12 and 13) and the use of bait (Figure 14), it is no surprise, landowners strongly oppose the idea of sharpshooters using bait on their land (Figure 15). On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 represents “definitely no” and 4 represents “definitely yes”, the mean response is 1.7. This response is highly correlated with Figure 12 ($r = 0.706$) and Figure 13 ($r = 0.772$) and extremely correlated with Figure 14 ($r = 0.905$).

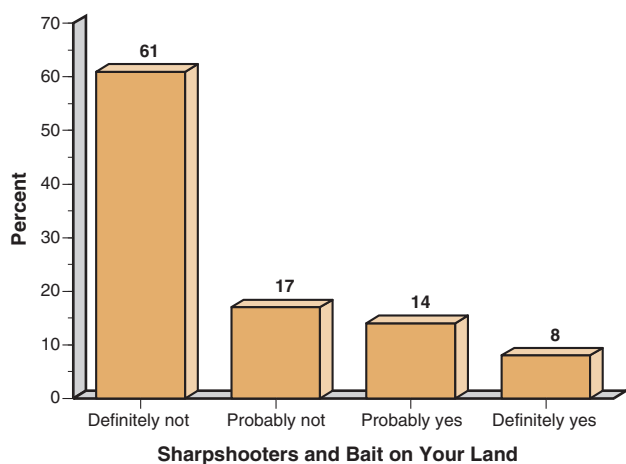


Figure 15. Percent of landowners that would allow sharpshooters to use bait on their land.

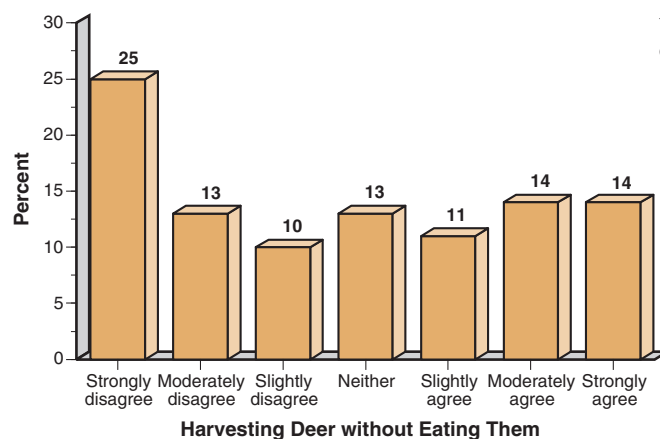
Figure 15 reveals that the strongest opposition to using sharpshooters is found to this question (allowing sharpshooters to use bait on the respondents' land). More than three-fourths of the landowners (79%) say they “definitely” or “probably” would not allow sharpshooters to shoot over bait on their land. Conversely, just over one-fifth of the landowners (22%) say they “definitely” or “probably” would allow sharpshooters to shoot over bait on their land.

Please note that although non-hunters continue to be more supportive of this measure than do hunters, this support is diminished. Twenty nine percent of non-hunters, compared to 14 percent of hunters, would likely allow sharpshooters to use bait on their own land.

Disposing of Deer without Eating Them

Opinion on whether or not it is acceptable to harvest deer without eating them, in an effort to control CWD, is varied with no obvious consensus. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents “strongly disagree”, 4 represents “neither agree nor disagree”, and 7 represents “strongly agree”, the mean response was 3.7, nearly exactly on the “neither agree nor disagree” mark. The category with the most responses was “strongly disagree.”

Figure 16 illustrates that almost one-half (48%) of the landowners believe that it is unacceptable to kill and dispose deer without eating them. About two-fifths (39%) of the landowners believe it is acceptable to kill and dispose deer rather than eat them.



We should note that the 2003 deer season did not offer opportunities to donate deer to a food pantry. The objecting 48 percent shown in Figure 16 may be voicing their disapproval with the disposal methods (e.g., landfill, incineration, or chemical digestion).

When these responses are divided between landowners who hunt and those who do not, a clearer picture can be seen (**Figure 17**). The mean response for hunters is 3.3, indicating that the majority of hunters disagree with disposing of deer without eating them. Landowners who do not hunt had a mean response of 4.3, indicating a very slight leaning toward agreement with disposing of deer without eating them. The non-hunter distribution was the most evenly spread across the spectrum of answers, while there were quite a few hunters who had strong feelings. In the words of one landowner: “*I will not let anybody come in and hunt and throw the deer in the dumpster.*”

Figure 16. Percent of landowners that disagree or agree with killing and disposing deer without eating them.

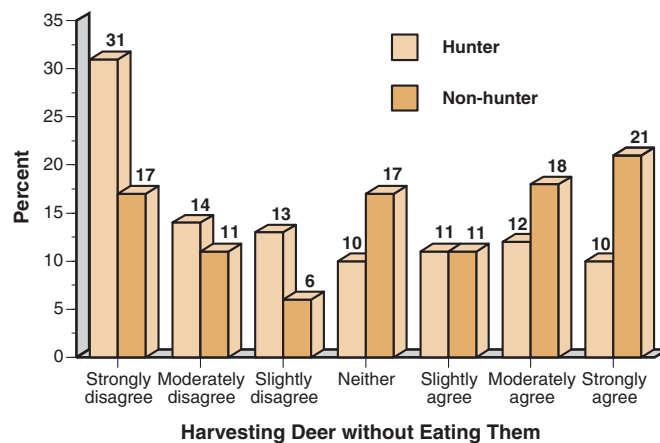


Figure 17. Percent of hunters and non-hunters that disagree or agree with killing and disposing deer without eating them.

What Limits the Number of Deer Landowners Will Kill on Their Land?

Landowners were asked if there are any factors that would limit the number of deer they are willing to have shot on their land in the DEZ in an effort to control CWD. Those who responded “Yes” were then asked how important seven reasons might be for limiting the number of deer they are willing to have shot. Responses were on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 represents “not important”, 3 represents “slightly important”, 5 represents “moderately important”, and 9 represents “very important.” Just over one-half of landowners (53%) have a reason for limiting the number of deer harvested on their land (Table 18).

Table 18. Reasons for limiting the number of deer killed on landowners’ property. (Mean scores followed by the same letter are not statistically different at $P \leq 0.05$.)

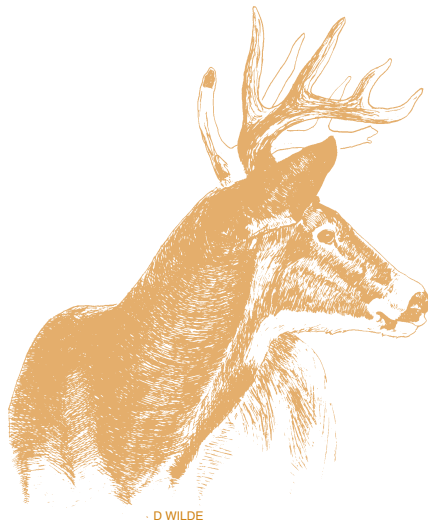
Limiting Reason	Percent “Moderately” or “Very” Important	Mean Score ^a
Do not want to kill more than can be used	72	6.4 A
Don’t believe we can stop the disease	73	6.1 A
Do not want to reduce the herd anymore	61	5.3 B
Have concerns about CWD	55	4.8 C
Not enough places to donate deer	50	4.6 C
Friends/relatives are not interested in taking any venison	51	4.6 C
Do not allow hunting on my land	38	3.9 D

^a Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 represents “not important,” 3 represents “slightly important,” 5 represents “moderately important,” and 9 represents “very important.”

Table 18 tells us that the two biggest reasons that landowners limited the deer harvest on their land are that many of them feel strongly that it is wrong to take deer that can’t be used (72%) and because they do not believe that CWD can be eradicated from the state (73%).

Three-fifths of the landowners (61%) limit the deer harvest on their land because they do not want to reduce the herd any further and only one-half or slightly more of the landowners limit the deer harvest because they have concerns about CWD (55%), because they do not believe there are enough places to donate deer (50%), or because friends and relatives are not interested in taking any venison from their land (51%). The least important consideration in limiting the deer harvest was landowners who do not allow hunting on their land (38%).

These results suggest that if landowner awareness increased for the food pantry program (i.e., an understanding that deer donated would not be wasted) they might be willing to increase the harvest of deer from their land.



Barriers to Eliminating CWD

From a landowner standpoint, the two barriers standing in the way of eliminating CWD are: 1) that CWD can never be totally eliminated from the wild deer herd, and 2) that some private landowners do not allow hunting on their land. Interestingly, very few feel that Wisconsin DNR or DATCP are the most serious barrier to eliminating CWD.

Figure 18 illustrates that 62 percent of the landowners believe that the two key barriers responsible for making CWD difficult to eradicate from the wild deer herd are 1) once CWD is in a wild deer herd it can never be totally eliminated (36%) and 2) that not all private landowners will allow hunting on their land (26%). No other barrier accounted for more than ten percent of the responses and the roles of Wisconsin DNR and DATCP were seen as the least significant barriers. We should point out here that hunters see these issues differently than other landowners. Hunters see two barriers as equally serious: the fact that landowners do not allow hunting (31%) and the fact that CWD cannot be eliminated (30%). Among other landowners, the intractability of CWD is seen as the most serious barrier (45%).

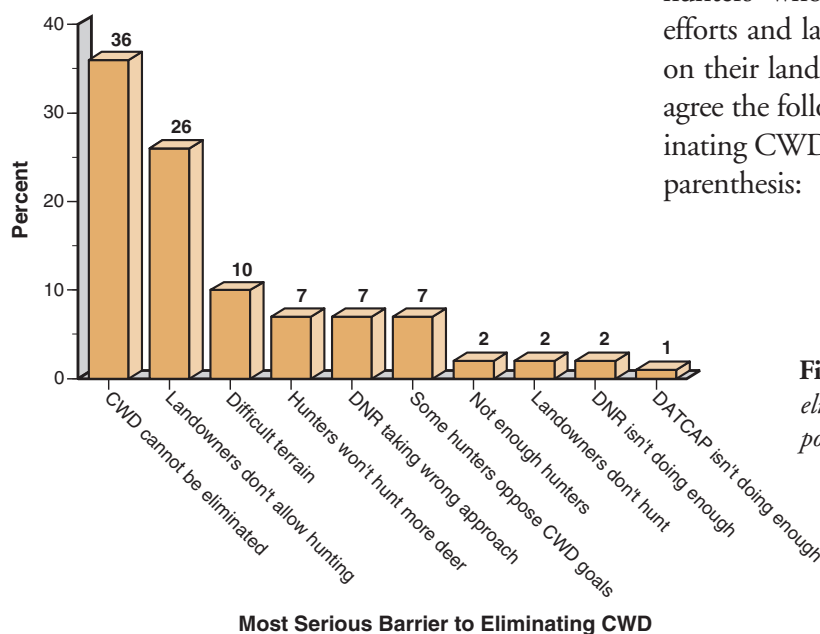


Figure 18. Most serious barrier to eliminating CWD from the wild deer population.

Table 19. Barriers to eliminating CWD.

Barriers	Percent "Slightly" to "Strongly" Agree	Mean Score ^a
Some hunters oppose state's efforts	81	5.6
Some private landowners do not allow hunting	77	5.4
Once CWD is in a herd it can't be eliminated	69	5.2
Some private landowners don't hunt	69	5.1
Hunters do not want to harvest more deer	69	5.0
Farmed deer escape into wild	47	4.3
Difficult terrain	46	4.2
Wisconsin DNR is taking the wrong approach	35	4.1
Department of agriculture not doing enough	31	4.0
Not enough hunters	33	3.5
Wisconsin DNR is not doing enough	18	3.3

^a Responses were given on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree," 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree," and 7 represents "strongly agree."

On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 represents "strongly disagree", 4 represents "neither agree nor disagree", and 7 represents "strongly agree", the results presented in **Table 19 tell us** that landowners believe the Department's greatest challenge to disease eradication is lack of cooperation (i.e., hunters who oppose the state's CWD control efforts and landowners that do not allow hunting on their land). The percentage of landowners that agree the following statements are barriers to eliminating CWD and the mean responses are given in parenthesis:

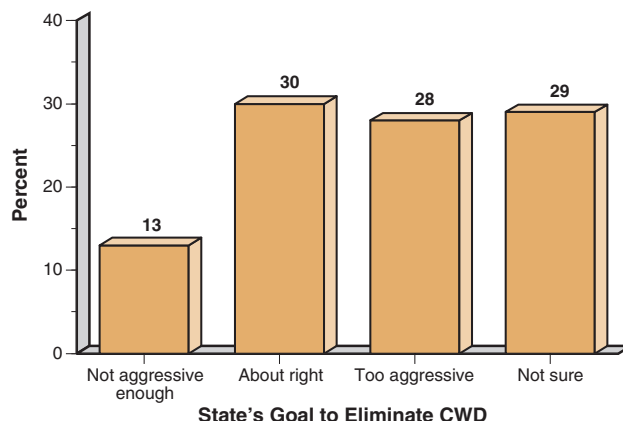
- hunters that oppose the state's CWD control efforts (81%, mean = 5.6);
- private landowners that do not allow hunting on their land (77%, mean = 5.4);
- once CWD is in a wild deer herd it can never be totally eliminated (69%, mean = 5.2);
- private landowners that do not hunt (69%, mean = 5.1);
- and hunters do not want to harvest more deer than they can use (69%, mean = 5.0).

Landowners are undecided when determining if the following items are barriers to eliminating CWD from the wild deer population. The percentage of landowners that are undecided and the mean responses are given in parenthesis:

- captive (farmed) deer with CWD escape into the wild (47%, mean = 4.3);
- the terrain/landscape is difficult (46%, mean = 4.2);
- Wisconsin DNR is taking the wrong approach to eliminating CWD (35%, mean = 4.1);
- and DATCP is not doing enough to eliminate CWD (31%, mean = 4.0).

Items not considered to be barriers to eliminating CWD include:

- there are not enough hunters (33%, mean = 3.5);
- and Wisconsin DNR is not doing enough to eliminate CWD (18%, mean = 3.3).



Is the State's Plan to Eliminate CWD too Aggressive?

Survey respondents were asked how aggressive they thought the state's goal was to eliminate CWD. On a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 represents "not aggressive enough" and 3 represents "too aggressive", the mean response is somewhere between "about right" and "too aggressive" (2.2). Among those who have an opinion, opinion is evenly divided between those who feel the state's strategy has been about right and those who feel the strategy has been too aggressive. Only a minority of 13 percent is convinced that the state has not been aggressive enough.

Figure 19 shows that landowners are divided in their opinions of the aggressiveness of the state's plan to eliminate CWD. Three in ten landowners (30%) believe the state's strategy has been about right. However, similar results are found from landowners that believe the strategy has been too aggressive (28%) and landowners that are unsure (29%). Only about one landowner in eight (13%) believes the strategy to eliminate CWD should be more aggressive. This result is considerably less than those who believe the strategy has been too aggressive.

We should note that the 29 percent "not sure" responses suggest that the jury is still out regarding this issue. This is not surprising given the unknown human and livestock risks posed by CWD. This response also implies that further outreach efforts are needed to inform landowners on why specific CWD control measures are being used and how their application is contributing to disease control and eradication. Additionally, we found that hunters are more likely than non-hunters to say the state's strategy has been too aggressive. Just over one-third of the hunters (35%) compared to almost one-fifth of the non-hunters (18%) believe the strategy has been too aggressive.

Figure 19. *Aggressiveness of the state's plan to eliminate CWD.*

How is the Wisconsin DNR Doing

On a scale of 0 to 9, where 0 represents an “F” grade and 9 represents an “A” grade, the mean response was 4.9 (equivalent to a B–). Only a minority of landowners feel the Wisconsin DNR is doing worse than a C (Figure 20).

Figure 20 is evidence that more landowners are satisfied than dissatisfied with the job the Wisconsin DNR is doing managing CWD. Two-fifths (41%) of the landowners give the Wisconsin DNR a grade of B or higher. Just over two-fifths (44%) of the landowners provide grades ranging from a C to a B–, while only 15 percent of the landowners give the Wisconsin DNR a grade of a C– (4%), a D (3%) or an F (8%).

Please note that hunters are somewhat more satisfied than other landowners with the job the Wisconsin DNR is doing managing CWD. Hunters provide a mean score of 5.1 while non-hunters provide a score of 4.5, a statistically measurable difference ($P < 0.005$). Grades of B or higher are given by 47 percent of the hunters and 31 percent of the non-hunters. These results are similar to those found in a recent University of Wisconsin hunter effort study. In that particular study, Holsman and Meinerz (2004)¹ found that 44 percent of DEZ hunters give the Wisconsin DNR a grade of B or higher.

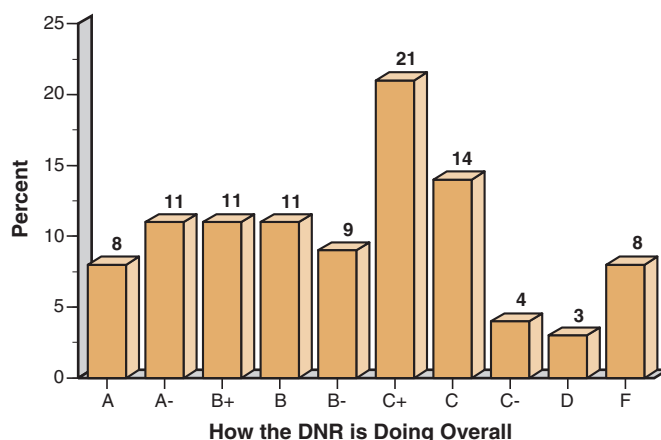


Figure 20. Landowner grades for Wisconsin DNR performance.

To conclude this section, focus group participants were asked what they would like to see from the Wisconsin DNR that would encourage a positive relationship with landowners. Representative responses include:

I think one of the things that would do that, if the DNR would say, 'Perhaps we should rethink our policy on this,' the policy that eradication may not be a solution or even necessary. 'We wanted to see this and needed your help in achieving this goal.' I think that would help turn a lot of us around and help ease the thing that they forced down our throats.

It was a political expedience for them to do something. I don't think they can continue to do that at this point. They swallowed this thing so far and spent so much money on it that it's going to be impossible...It's got to be a real radical step. These focus sessions are great but they're not going to convince the political aspect of this thing to change. It's got to be a radical change.

¹ Holsman, RH and RD Meinerz. 2004. A preliminary report on hunter effort and attitudes in Wisconsin's Chronic Wasting Disease Eradication Zone: Results from the 2003 extended deer season. University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, College of Natural Resources. 51pp. <<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/CWDreport.pdf>>